

SENATE BILL REPORT

SHB 1261

As Reported by Senate Committee On:
Human Services & Corrections, March 26, 2013

Title: An act relating to the provision of short-term emergency and crisis care for children removed from their homes.

Brief Description: Establishing a resource and assessment center license for agencies to provide short-term emergency and crisis care for children removed from their homes.

Sponsors: House Committee on Early Learning & Human Services (originally sponsored by Representatives Hope and Santos).

Brief History: Passed House: 3/06/13, 97-0.

Committee Activity: Human Services & Corrections: 3/18/13, 3/26/13 [DP].

SENATE COMMITTEE ON HUMAN SERVICES & CORRECTIONS

Majority Report: Do pass.

Signed by Senators Pearson, Vice Chair; Darneille, Ranking Member; Baumgartner, Hargrove, Harper and Padden.

Staff: Joan Miller (786-7784)

Background: The Department of Social and Health Services (DSHS) has the authority to establish licensing requirements for foster homes and other agencies or entities that provide care for children residing in out-of-home placements. Resource and assessment centers provide immediate placement and care for children who have been removed from their homes. Resource and assessment centers entered into an agreement with regional DSHS offices to provide emergency or crisis care to children. Currently, resource and assessment centers are not formally licensed by DSHS.

Summary of Bill: A resource and assessment center is defined as an agency that provides short-term emergency and crisis care for a period of up to 72 hours, excluding weekends and holidays, to children who have been removed from their parents or guardians by Child Protective Services or law enforcement. A resource and assessment center may provide placement for a child over 12 years of age, if the child has a sibling under age 13 who is placed in the receiving care center.

This analysis was prepared by non-partisan legislative staff for the use of legislative members in their deliberations. This analysis is not a part of the legislation nor does it constitute a statement of legislative intent.

DSHS is authorized to license resource and assessment centers if (1) there is a demonstrated need in the local community for a resource and assessment center, (2) the center will be staffed primarily by trained volunteers, and (3) the center demonstrates that it is not financially dependent on reimbursement from the state to operate. When adopting licensing rules, DSHS must allow for flexibility in operating hours for resource and assessment centers and provide centers the ability to operate in a residential area. Centers may operate 24 hours per day, seven days per week but are not required to be open if there are no children in their care. Resource and assessment centers may not be used to address placement disruptions for children who have been removed from a foster home because of behavior or safety concerns.

Appropriation: None.

Fiscal Note: Available.

Committee/Commission/Task Force Created: No.

Effective Date: Ninety days after adjournment of session in which bill is passed.

Staff Summary of Public Testimony: PRO: Hand in Hand is the only center in Washington that provides this service, and that is simply due to the lack of licensing available. It is difficult for us to maintain the pilot program because there is not a license that is even close. In most areas, children who are pulled from a home during a drug raid or domestic violence incident are driving around in social workers' cars because there is nowhere to place them. We are just looking for a way to serve kids, and establishing a licensing category would help us do so.

Persons Testifying: PRO: Todd McNeal, Hand in Hand.